



Making the Most of Time in Learning

In a school like HIS Schools, ***the classes are small enough*** that you can expect to maximize the scope of the learning as well as the effectiveness of the learning more than schools with large groups of children. Imagine classes, even in a multi-age grouping, of 5 to 10 students, as opposed to a class of 25 - 35 of students at all levels of reading and math.

It's important to accept that ***every minute of the day will not be spent on academics*** -- and that's not only okay, that can be an important aspect of taking advantage of a myriad learning opportunities that HE is setting up for HIS children.

It is also important to accept that ***there is never enough time for ANY teacher to cover ALL the content in recommended curriculum***. That's okay! There is enough repetition in the curriculum over the course of a K-12 schooling to cover any gaps.

- Take a deep breath. Don't stress. Pray: "Lord, help the children to learn all you need them to learn today. They are Your children. Guide us, be our Master Teacher. Amen."
- Research has shown that when it comes to time spent on learning that there is a point of diminishing returns. This means, too much time pushing and working hard can reach a point where they will cease learning. It is more advantageous to teach less if it means they are able to process it, let it soak in, than to keeping pushing more, just for the sake of "more" that will not soak in.
- Dr. Coleman has referred to this point as "Saturated to the point of run-off." It can happen to all of us at any age. Like ground that can only soak up so much water at one time, once it's saturated, all the rest is lost as run-off.
- Keep in mind: the younger they are, the shorter the attention span, the sooner the point of run-off occurs.

Maximize Learning time by Mixing it up:

- New learning (direct instruction) usually includes students listening as the teacher teaches them something new. This usually involves reading, as well as paper and pencil. This takes more effort for all students than other methods of learning, so giving them "breaks" from reading, paper and pencil, learning, will actually maximize learning time. Rule of thumb: Mix

it up approximately every 20 minutes in K-2. You can go longer in higher grades, but 40 in middle, and longer in high school.

- New learning needs to be followed immediately by guided practice. Guided Practice gives them the essential opportunity to practice the new learning individually while the teacher watches and corrects immediately so they don't practice mistakes.

Allow for the time to provide guided practice in the 20 minutes of new learning.

- For the young ones: Take a 10 minute "break" with puzzles, "skip counting" with a jump rope. Although they will see this as play it is wonderful learning!
- For students of all ages, taking turns telling stories, even if it is off-topic can provide a much-needed, but easily controlled "break". This is a favorite of all ages! It takes no materials or preparation. It also provides opportunity to speak God's Word into the story.
- Breaking up the new learning frequently with opportunities for verbal and written processing (explained below) will maximize the time spent on learning.

Maximize Learning by Providing Time for Processing

Scholars frequently use computers to help explain how learning occurs, especially how they store new information so it is not lost. Prior to personal computers, there word processors. If you've ever used "Word", you are familiar with this process. Words are keyed in, but then they are organized and edited, processed and then saved in files, even backed up.

- **Verbal processing** -- whole class/group discussion. Many students learn through verbal processing. This is how their brains are organizing it, finding where to "place" it so they can retrieve it. The more they can link new knowledge to prior knowledge, the more they can utilize these links to retrieve and organize.
- **Written processing** -- is a similar process for the older students. Writing is always enhanced, and eased when it is preceded with verbal processing. This is true for all ages. To maximize the time spent writing -- whether it is as a processing tool, and/or if it is to practice the act of writing of all genres, **precede** the process with opportunity to talk **prior** to the act of writing. This can occur between pairing the students up, or as a group. **Graphic Organizers** are also very valuable: Tables, Venn diagrams, etc. You can find many in the curriculum or online.
- **Kinesthetic processing** -- you can maximize learning by providing opportunities for them, not just the teacher --- to act out in play, or demonstrate, or engage in counting, clapping, jumping, singing. Consider how much they can learn -- really learn through songs, or counting by 2's, 3's through "skip counting jump rope". They can all take a turn, jump rope and instead of counting every jump by 1's count, "3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 17, 21". Repeat and repeat, letting everyone have a turn, but everyone counting.

Our times are in His hands. And He will guide every minute of your day.